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Letter dated 2 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward the attached text of a government statement issued by the Office of the President on Thursday, 1 June 2000.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibrahim M. **Kamara**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 2 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Government statement of Thursday, 1 June 2000

The Government wishes to express its pleasure at the release of all the abducted United Nations peacekeepers by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and acknowledges the role played by President Charles Taylor in the realization of this objective. The Government wishes, however, to remind the RUF that the release of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) hostages was only part of the demand made by the Government and the international community. Therefore, despite the sense of relief created by the release of the UNAMSIL personnel, the Government has no intention of losing sight of the fact that all the weapons and other equipment seized from the peacekeepers have not been returned. In addition, the RUF is still holding captive thousands of men, women and children, and continues to abduct many more on a daily basis. These men, women and children are either forced into combat roles, or used as forced labour or sex slaves. The Government therefore continues to demand that the RUF should return all the weapons and equipment seized from the peacekeepers, including those seized from the Guineans, and release all abducted Sierra Leoneans.

In this respect, the Government would like to remind the international community that the weapons seized from the peacekeepers have been used by the RUF in attacks against government forces. In fact, right now, armoured cars and some other sophisticated UNAMSIL weapons are being moved into position by the RUF in the Bunumbu area.

It is therefore crucial that the international community prevail on President Charles Taylor to continue to use his influence with the RUF to secure the release of all equipment seized from the peacekeeping troops, as well as the release of all abducted Sierra Leoneans, particularly women and children. In addition, President Taylor should use his influence to prevail upon the RUF to remove all obstacles to the free movement of people throughout the country.

The Government also wishes to draw the attention of the United Nations in particular and the entire international community to what appears to be a recurring pattern in RUF activities in relation to abductions and seizing of property. It is this pattern that emerged when in January 1999 the rebel forces invaded Freetown and abducted large numbers of people. After the signing of the ceasefire agreement in May 1999, the rebels released some of the women and children being held by them.

Since then, the world has forgotten about the large numbers of women and children still being held and who continue to be forced into combat or used as sex slaves. The world cannot continue to forget them, nor can we allow the impression to be given that their lives and liberty are not important. In addition, we cannot forget about the large quantities of arms, ammunition and sophisticated equipment seized from the peacekeeping troops.

Finally, the Government wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement (S/1999/777, annex) and calls once more on all those RUF members who are not parties to the recent actions of Foday Sankoh and his belligerent comrades in arms to cooperate with the Government and the international community in ensuring that real peace is achieved in Sierra Leone by taking urgent steps to disarm, demobilize and prepare themselves for reintegration into society.